

ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed on July 20, 2006 has been carefully considered. In the Office Action, Claims 12-18 stand rejected and Claims 19-24, 26-28, 30, 31 and 33 are allowed. The Applicants have amended Claim 12. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in light of the amendments above and the remarks below.

Allowed Claims

In the Office Action, Claims 19-24, 26-28, 30, 31 and 33 were allowed.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by US 4,955,654 to Tsuchihashi. The Applicants respectfully traverse and disagree with the rejection.

Tsuchihashi discloses an end effector for use in a remote manipulator system for space crafts. The effector is secured to a front end of a manipulator of a remote manipulator system and having a function for clamping dedicated objects, wherein a force (or torque) applied to the end effector at the time of clamping the dedicated object is detected so that a driving portion of the end effector is feedback-controlled in order to protect the end effector from being applied with a force (or torque) exceeding a predetermined level. However, in contrast to amended Claim 12, Tsuchihashi does not disclose that the end effector is for use in a simulated medical procedure. For at least these reasons, Tsuchihashi does not teach the subject matter claimed in Claim 12. Accordingly, Claim 12 is distinguishable from Tsuchihashi and is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 12.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Tsuchihashi in view of US Pat. No. 5,805,140 to Rosenberg et al and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,062,865 to Bailey. The Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 13-18 are dependent on independent Claim 12. As stated above, Claim 12 is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, Claims 13-18 are allowable for being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Conclusion

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance and early favorable consideration of this reply is earnestly solicited. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

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Thelen Reid & Priest LLP
P.O. Box 640640
San Jose, CA 95164-0640
Tel. (408) 292-5800
Fax. (408) 287-8040

Respectfully submitted,
THELEN REID & PRIEST, LLP


Suvashis Bhattacharya
Reg. No. 46,554